

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3741

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

USNATO 1659

USNMR SHAPE

USDOCOSOUTH

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

SECDEF WASHDC

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

USMISSION USUN

CINCUSAFE

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAREUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3634

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, BR, TU

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF HELLENIC NAVY CHIEF AND GREEK FOREIGN

MINISTER TETENES ON GREEK-TURKISH AEGEAN PROBLEM

1. SUMMARY. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS JUNE 8 AND JUNE 10 BOTH HELLENIC NAVY CHIEF AND FOREIGN MINISTER TETENES MAINTAINED THAT TURKISH OBJECTIVES IN AEGEAN BROADER IN SCOPE THAN ISSUE OF OIL EXPLORATION RIGHTS AND THAT CARACAS LOS CONFERENCE WOULD REINFORCE GREEK POSITION ON CONTINENTAL SHELF. END SUMMARY.

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2. AT SOCIAL RECEPTION JUNE 8, DCM HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS

AEGEAN SITUATION PRIVATELY AND FRANKLY WITH ADMIRAL ARAPAKIS, CHIEF HELLENIC NAVY. ARAPAKIS SAID HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH LIMITED TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES OF TURKISH HYDROGRAPHIC VESSEL "KANDRALARI" AND AWARE OF TURKISH RIGHTS TO ENGAGE IN RESEARCH IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. NEVERTHELESS, HE HAD DESPATCHED GREEK NAVAL VESSELS TO ACCOMPANY IT DURING ITS RECENT RESEARCH IN AEGEAN OUTSIDE TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS AND WOULD DO SO AGAIN IN THE LATTER PART OF JUNE WHEN IT WAS APPARENTLY SCHEDULED TO RESUME SUCH OPERATIONS.

3. ARAPAKIS MAINTAINED THAT GREECE SINCERELY WANTED TO HAVE FRIENDLY COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH ITS TURKISH NEIGHBOR AND ALLY, BUT LONG EXPERIENCE WITH TURKEY HAD DEMONSTRATED THAT FIRMNESS AND STRENGTH IN PROTECTING GREEK SOVEREIGN INTERESTS WERE AN ESSENTIAL PRECONDITION TO A TRUE UNDERSTANDING. ACQUISITION OF THE GREEK AEGEAN ISLANDS OFF THE TURKISH MAINLAND WAS A LONGSTANDING TURKISH NATIONAL OBJECTIVE WELL-KNOWN TO GREECE. IF TURKEY SUCCEEDED IN EXTENDING ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS HALFWAY ACROSS THE AEGEAN, THESE GREEK ISLANDS WOULD BECOME "HOSTAGES," AND TURKEY WOULD THEN MOVE INTO THE ABSORPTION PHASE. THIS WAS WHY GREECE STRONGLY RESISTED TURKISH CLAIMS NOT ONLY IN THIS INSTANCE BUT ALSO IN THE PAST IN CONNECTION WITH NATO COMMAND AREAS. ARAPAKIS REMARKED THAT AT THE RECENT SHAPEX HE HAD ASKED HIS TURKISH MILITARY COLLEAGUES WHY TURKEY, WHICH HAD NEVER QUESTIONED GREECE'S PAST ISSUANCE OF EXPLORATION RIGHTS IN THE AEGEAN, HAD SUDDENLY, WITHOUT CONSULTING GREECE, ISSUED EXPLORATION RIGHTS ITSELF LAST NOVEMBER. HIS TURKISH MILITARY COLLEAGUES COULD NOT REPLY WHICH CONVINCED ARAPAKIS THAT THE TURKISH OBJECTIVE IN THE AEGEAN WAS POLITICAL RATHER THAN ECONOMIC. ARAPAKIS THOUGHT THE TURKS HAD MISREAD PRIME MINISTER MARKEZINIS' FREQUENT REFERENCES TO AN OVERALL TURKISH-GREEK SETTLEMENT AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS AND HAD SOUGHT TO EXPLOIT IT. DCM OBSERVED THAT MARKEZINIS HAD AN HISTORICAL AND BROAD PERSPECTIVE WHICH MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN APPRECIATED BY EITHER SIDE.

4. ARAPAKIS CONCLUDED THAT IN ANY EVENT GREECE WOULD NOT RPT NOT "NEGOTIATE" WITH TURKEY ON THE AEGEAN BEFORE THE CARACAS LOS CONFERENCE BECAUSE ANY AGREEMENTS REACHED THERE PROBABLY WOULD FAVOR THE GREEK POSITION, WHICH HE BELIEVED WAS WHY TURKEY WAS TRYING TO ENGAGE GREECE BILATERALLY BEFOREHAND.
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5. COMMENT: ARAPAKIS IS A FRIENDLY, PRO-U.S., PRO-NATO OFFICER WITH CONSIDERABLE SOPHISTICATION AND SOCIAL GRACE. HE DOES NOT MAKE POLICY, BUT CLEARLY REFLECTS IT. IN THIS RESPECT HE IS A VELVET GLOVE ON AN IRON-FISTED POLICY.

6. AFTER A LUNCHEON JUNE 10 GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR ON OCCASION OF VISIT OF SENATOR MCGEE, SENATOR, FONMIN TETENES AND MFA

SECRETARY GENERAL VLACHOS ALSO DISCUSSED GREEK/TURKISH AEGEAN PROBLEM.

7. SENATOR LAUNCHED CONVERSATION BY REFERRING TO CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN OVER APPARENTLY SHARP DIFFERENCES WHICH HAD ARISEN BETWEEN TWO KEY NATO ALLIES. AFTER EMPHAISIZING MUTUAL STRATEGIC INTEREST IN SECURITY OF EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT GREECE AND TURKEY WOULD FIND WAY TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER AEGEAN OIL BY PEACEFUL MEANS AND PERHAPS SOME KIND OF JOINT VENTURE. TETENES IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED THAT GREEK POSITION WAS SOLIDLY FOUNDED ON INTERNATIONAL LAW, THAT TURKEY HAD NO INTEREST IN COOPERATING WITH GREECE ON THIS OR ANY OTHER MATTER RELATIVE TO AEGEAN RESOURCES, AND THAT TURKISH IDEA WAS TO ESTABLISH RIGHTS RELATIVE TO CONTINENTAL SHELF THAT COULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE USED TO SUPPORT MOVE TO CLAIM GREEK ISLANDS CLOSEST TO TURKISH COAST. HE ADDED THAT WHEN GREEKS SOME TIME AGO SOUGHT TO WORK OUT MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS ARRANGEMENTS CONCERNING AEGEAN FISHERIES, TURKS HAD IMMEDIATELY REJECTED PROPOSAL. HE BELIEVED THAT TURKEY WOULD BE EQUALLY NEGATIVE IN RESPECT TO OIL.

8. VLACHOS ELABORATED ON POINT OF TURKISH INTRANSIGENCE BY OBSERVATION THAT "TURKISH PROVOCATION" IN SENDING SEISMIC SHIP WAS CLEAR INDICATION THAT TURKEY WAS NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS ON SUBJECT BUT DELIBERATELY TRYING TO BUILD UP SITUATION TO POINT OF CONFRONTATION. HE SAID GOG INTENDED TO MAINTAIN ITS POLICY OF RESTRAINT BUT ADDED THAT, IF FULL FACTS CONCERNING RECENT TURKISH ACTIONS HAD BEEN MADE KNOW TO GREEKS TO GREEKS GENERALLY, VIOLENT REACTION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. FONMIN INTERJECTED AT THIS POINT THAT HE WANTED U.S. TO KNOW, BUT ON BASIS OF "STRICT SECRECY," THAT TURKISH PROVOCATION HAD NOT BEEN LIMITED TO SEISMIC SHIP. ACCORDING TO HIM, TURKISH NAVY HAD INTERCEPTED AT LEAST TWO GREEK COASTAL FREIGHTERS AND ESCORTED THEM TO TURKISH PORT. GOG HAD IMMEDIATELY MADE STRONG PROTEST AND CONFIDENTIAL

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SHIPS HAD BEEN RELEASED.

9. SENATOR RETURNED TO POINT THAT NATO ALLIES SHOULD RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES PEACEFULLY AND URGED THAT GOG NOT LOSE SIGHT OF STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS OF NATO IN AREA. WHILE BOTH GREEKS ACCEPTED VALIDITY OF HIS VIEWS IN THIS REGARD THEY INSISTED THAT GREEK NATIONAL INTEREST AND SOVEREIGN RIGHTS MUST COME FIRST. CONVERSATION CONCLUDED WITH FONMIN'S ASSURANCE THAT GOG WOULD BE PREPARED ENTER CONVERSATIONS WITH TURKS, IN FIRST INSTANCE DURING OTTAWA NATO MINISTERIAL, BUT HE EXPRESSED PESSIMISM ABOUT ARRIVING AT SOLUTION, GIVEN TURKISH ACTIONS AND DECLARATIONS. HE ASSERTED ALL GREEKS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD PRESENT REGIME, WOULD SOLIDLY UNITE BEHIND GOVERNMENT IN UNYIELDING STAND IN RELATION TO TURKS, EVEN TO POINT OF TAKING UP ARMS.
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